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Sneaky Scheduling

Until Thursday, North Carolina had not executed a prisoner in about a year. This seems like a fishy move on Easley's part.

The debate about the death penalty is perhaps one of the most controversial questions in American politics today, one that is influenced by issues of morality, religion, class, race and justice. But should that question also be affected by election politics as well?

After a yearlong hiatus, the state of North Carolina resumed executions Thursday, when Michael Sexton was put to death for the rape and murder of a social worker. Two more executions are scheduled between now and Dec. 7.

Although many people would find these executions disturbing in and of themselves, the matter of their timing is particularly troubling. The Attorney General's office is supposed to set each execution date after they receive notice an inmate's appeals have been exhausted. In Sexton's case, that was Aug. 9. Yet his execution was scheduled for three months later, two days after Attorney General Mike Easley was elected governor.

There is no proof that the execution schedule was influenced directly by concerns about Easley's campaign. A spokeswoman for the Attorney General's office said that each execution date is set a "reasonable amount of time" after the appeals are exhausted. That amount of time differs from

case to case, she said.

But even if that is true, the timing of Sexton's execution certainly gives the appearance of political manipulation and would make a great deal of political sense. Easley's campaign no doubt would have liked to avoid angry protesters chanting his name outside Central Prison before Election Day.

Yet that is a consequence he should have had to accept if he publicly supports the death penalty as he says he does. Many people might disagree with him, but he should nevertheless have had the strength of his convictions to carry out his work without regard to how many points he might lose in the latest election poll.

As it is, the apparent injection of vulgar politics into Sexton's execution process threatens the credibility of an institution that is already the subject of immense scrutiny and criticism, in both this state and others. If Easley truly supports the death penalty, he should have allowed the process to go on as normal. If he has questions about either its fairness, its use or the overall morality of it, then he should make those concerns public.

The death penalty is carried out behind closed doors, but that doesn't mean that these questions belong there as well.

Switch the System

The Electoral College system of choosing the president fails to represent the people's wishes. It should be done away with.

Once the battle between Al Gore and George W. Bush finally is over, citizens for generations to come will look back upon the race as one of the closest and most confusing ways the nation ever has elected its leader.

But this election also should go down in history as the country's primary motive for abolishing the Electoral College and relying on the popular vote to pick the president.

Although the margin is extremely slim, Vice President Gore unofficially has been declared the winner of the nation's popular vote. But after the ballots are finished being tallied in Florida, Gore might lose that state's electoral votes — which will cost him the election.

In most cases, the candidate who takes the nation's popular vote also will lead in electoral votes. But that doesn't mean the people should be ignored. Because the president presides over the nation, not the individual states, he should be picked by the people rather than electors from each state.

Granted, problems with the electoral system don't occur often. In fact, it's been more than 100 years since something like this happened, when Samuel Tilden won the popular vote but lost the election because Benjamin Harrison carried the majority of the Electoral College votes.

But even when the popular vote and the

electoral tallies are in line, the Electoral College often fails in accurately representing the nation's desires. Take North Carolina, for instance. Gore won 43 percent of the popular vote. But because Bush won the majority (56 percent), he garners all 14 of its Electoral College votes.

Under the Electoral College system, all North Carolinians who supported Gore basically were disregarded.

If the president was elected by popular vote, more voices would be heard in the democratic system. Votes that fall in the minority within each state would count in the grander scheme of things.

And under a direct popular vote, third-party candidates would have a greater chance of garnering support. Ralph Nader likely would have received more votes if people didn't feel as if they were ruining Gore's chances of getting electoral votes with a vote that didn't count beyond the state level. With a popular election, citizens would be more likely to vote according to their conscience, for their votes would count on a broader, national level.

Despite a very confusing race for the presidency this year, one thing is clear: An election by popular vote next time will ensure that the people get the leader they want.



An Ode to UNC's Lovely Ladies

I've had my eyes on you for a while. I knew you were a special person from the first time I talked to you. No doubt you had the looks.

Subtle attractiveness.

Your natural beauty allows you to stay gorgeous at all times. Little makeup. You don't always have to squeeze into skintight outfits to show your assets. Your sunshine radiates even through sweat pants and flip-flops.

Pretty face with a well-toned body. Your hair feels like silk, and your soft skin is gentle to the touch. Plus you've got those delicate hands that I adore, accentuated by flawless nails.

You stay fresh with light perfumes. You are a breath of fresh air every time I'm lucky enough to be in your presence.

Your wardrobe is impeccable with clothes for every occasion. Your style fits your person. Instead of following trends, you set them. You are confident enough in yourself to ignore the crowd and blaze trails.

You sashay through the Triangle in an array of cutting-edge fashions. It seems like you never wear the same outfit twice. Regardless of whether it's Express, Moschino, Guess, V, LVLX, Donna Karen, BeBe, D&G or Gap you always look lovely.

Without question, you look good.

Envious females barrage you in your suite, at the clubs and on The Yard questioning your every movement.

"Where do you shop?" "How much did you pay for that cute little top?" "What are you doing tonight?" "How's your love life?"

Of course, you are more than meets the eye. As our conversations became longer and more frequent, you let me see a small slice of your world. I take note of your hopes, dreams, aspirations, motives and fears.

You've got it all together, and you make all the right moves at all the right times. Your priorities are straight, and you know what you have to do. More impressively, you finish every-



KOFI BOFAH
PHILOSOPHY .22

thing that you start. Your mental is what distances you from the pack.

Every day you continue to prove that you are much more than a pretty face.

You're a total package. With beauty, intelligence and an engaging personality, you've got it all.

Of course what looks good isn't always good.

And I only give credit where credit is due. I've done some behind-the-scenes detective work and have made a few inquiries about your person.

Most females on this campus said that they love everything that you stand for. All of your friends promise eternal loyalty and respect toward you.

But with any precious individual, negativity tinged with jealousy always looms large. One girl summed it up with two sentences:

"I can't stand her. She thinks she is so like that."

Your reputation remains spotless with the fellas. We adore you and your name floats around in all positive conversations about UNC's women.

It's a fact that you look good. It's a fact that you are intelligent. It's a fact that you have a beautiful personality. It's a fact that you display a wonderful attitude.

It's a fact that your radiance lights up any room and your rays of sunshine melt the clouds of the dreariest days.

Your reputation is spotless. Nobody has

abused or disrespected you, and there are no scandals swirling around your name.

I hear nothing but positives from all that are touched by you. Your only "fault" is that you proceed cautiously with relationships. You always have been selective, and few have been able to break down your defenses and get close to you — a bad sign for men that don't recognize your inspirational nature.

But a good sign for those of us that wish to treat you like the queen that you are.

I remain content simply to be in your presence. I'm cool with just being friends. I love being there to observe you in your natural state.

It's difficult for me to come at you the way I wish. A lady as special as you deserves undivided attention. I barely have time for myself as it is.

Would the study of double-entry accounting, cool jazz, Shakespeare, Charlemagne and logistics consume all of the time I wish I could give to you?

Maybe I'm just scared.

I know these are simply words, but trust that my feelings are sincere. I have a genuine interest in you, and I promise to convert talk into action.

Judge me for me. Don't worry about my grade point average, don't stress my major, disregard my career goals and ignore the type of car that I drive. I implore you to separate the material from the man.

As all the extras are stripped from my person, what remains?

If you like what you see, then we can move forward.

If you don't see a person that you could be with, I'll just have to deal with that.

Regardless of your stance, let me know ...

Dedicated to all the beautiful, respectable, top-notch women of UNC. Don't let negativity steal your shine. Reach Kofi at bofah26@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

African-American Slave Descendants Deserve Reparations

TO THE EDITOR:

Thanks to the DTH editorial board for sparking discussion on the reparations issue. Let me first say that I support the concept of reparations to descendants of African-American slaves. To effectively address the continued consequences of slavery, reparations must be paid for uncompensated labor and enslavement.

In the Nov. 8 editorial, two primary reasons for opposing reparations were put forth: The living descendants of slaves are centuries removed from slavery, and the move to provide reparations will divide the country. It is important to clarify that the transition from slavery to freedom has been more of a gradual one following the abolition of slavery, through the Jim Crow era and Civil Rights era, and continuing today. The barrier to inherited wealth, the high rate of African-American poverty, and the income gap between black and white households have all survived as current-day legacies of slavery.

Reparations are certainly not a new idea. Indeed, there are many

examples of compensation paid by governments and private companies. The U.S. government is preparing to pay reparations to Japanese Americans held in internment camps during World War II. Several German companies paid reparations to Holocaust victims for forced labor. Native Americans have received compensation, though minimal, for past injustices. Although never realized, let us not forget the "40 acres and a mule" bill put forth and rescinded after the Civil War.

The U.S. government bears responsibility for protecting and encouraging the slave trade, slavery and segregation in law and deed. Therefore, the U.S. government is the focus of many efforts to obtain reparations. The type of reparations that I support would be paid by the U.S. government taking the form of educational trusts, interest-free loans and other targeted economic development remedies. This is the only way for the U.S. government to fully acknowledge and take responsibility for its role in slavery.

An argument that the struggle for reparations will divide the country is a weak one. The road to justice is often difficult, as our history has demonstrated many times. The point is not to "rehash animosities," but

rather to seek justice.

It's not too late for justice. Lawsuits might be a way to address the issue; however, there needs to be a forum on the issue in the legislative and executive levels of government. More importantly in my mind is the need for people to begin talking about the continued legacy of slavery and "the problem of the color line, and not continue as if it doesn't exist." As a descendant of a Southern slave owner, I recognize the need for justice and for healing; thus my support goes to paying down the nation's debt — the debt owed to the descendants of African-American slaves.

Joseph T. Kennedy
Graduate Student
Environmental Sciences and Engineering

Your Name in Print

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Questions? Call Editorial Page Editor Kelli Boutin at 962-4086.



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